

M: 35-14-05

1938

Bethesda Post Office (Darcy's Store)  
7400 Wisconsin Avenue (MD 355)  
Bethesda

The Bethesda Post Office is one of a number of buildings constructed in the business district during the late 1930s. Coming at the tail end of the depression and the beginning of a boom period in the development of the commercial district, it marks Bethesda's rise from the depression to prosperity. It was constructed in 1938 by the Sofarelli Brothers of Jamaica, New York. It was built in Neo-Georgian style of native stone. Four other structures in the district were also constructed of native stone prior to the post office, including the Bank of Bethesda (1926), the C&P Telephone Company Building (1928), and two shopping complexes (1928). Thus, the post office was constructed in compatibility with the existing structures. The post office does, however, exhibit a bit more detailing than these buildings. When completed it was said to be "one of the most up-to-date buildings of its kind in the National Capital's Suburbs," according to postal officials.

## 1. General Information

a. Name Bethesda, Maryland		b. Historic/Original Name Darcy's Store/Post Office	
c. Parcel No. 13-0675/G01		d. Site Size (Sq. Ft.) 17,569	e. Site Size (Dimension) Irregular Shaped
f. Property Address 7400 Wisconsin Avenue Bethesda, MD 20814		g. Building Size (Sq. Ft.) 12,128	h. Building Size (Dimensions) 64'0" x 60'8"
i. Is Building Open to Public? Yes - Public Lobby		j. Address of Office with Building Records (name and address of field office, region, etc. with official file.) Field Real Estate and Buildings Office P.O. Box 701, Columbia, MD 21045	
		k. Original Use Mercantile Establishment/U.S. Post Office	
		l. Present Use U.S. Post Office	

## 2. Property Appearance

a. Description of General Area (Describe neighborhood, historic district, land use & direct or indirect effect upon other building of historic interest. If more space is needed, attach additional sheets.) The Bethesda, Maryland Post Office is located within a commercial area and is not in an historic district.	b. General Condition of Property (Site and Building) At the time of original inspection in January, 1983, the box lobby was in process of being expanded. The lobby area had been recently painted but the remainder of building needed painting badly. The vestibule ceiling and rear wall on mailing platform showed evidence of water seepage. Platform bumpers were missing. Very little employee parking and none for customers.
	d. Description of Building Material (Roofs, walls, foundation, interior features, floor and ceiling, etc.) Roof - Slate with cupola and wood cornice Exterior - Stone and granite. Granite steps at front entrance. Interior Features: Walls - Plastered Floors - Lobby - Terrazo Workroom - Asphalt Plank Basement - Vinyl Asbestos Tile Ceiling - Suspended Foundation - Poured Concrete Public Lobby - Marble Wainscot Used
c. Description of Floorplan (Attach drawings if available.) First floor consists of public lobbies, Superintendent's office, rest rooms, mailing vestibule and mailing platform. (Original plan) Basement area consists of boiler, fuel, swing and storage rooms plus janitor's toilet and closet and carrier's toilet and unfinished and unexcavated areas. Copies of original plans are attached.	

e. Description of unusual or unique subterranean features

## 3. Architectural History

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a. Date Constructed 1938	c. Date Restored/Renovated 1965	d. Date Moved to Present Site 1938
e. Original Owner (Name & Biographical Data) reason: Department U.S. Government	f. Original Builder (Name & Biographical Data) Unknown	
g. Original Architect (Name & Biographical Data) Louis A. Simon Supervising Architect	h. Other Significant Participants (Names, relation to building, biographical data) Henry Morgenthau, Secretary of Treasury James A. Farley, Postmaster General Neal A. Melick, Supervising Engineer	
i. Restoration Architect or Designer (if building has been restored/renovated) Burket, Tilghman, Nelson Associates, Architects		

## 4. Architectural Significance

Identify type, period, method of construction, artistic value, significant and distinguishable entity (See National Register criteria, 36 CFR 60.6, Criteria for Evaluation).

The building has no known architectural significance, other than exterior finish.

## 5. Historical Significance

Identify the broad patterns of American history (National, state or local level) or historic persons with whom the property is associated. (See National Register Criteria.)

Bethesda, in Hebrew Tongue meaning "House of Mercy" was named after the Bethesda Presbyterian Church which was built in 1820. Bethesda is an election district and not a town. As best as can be determined, the first Post Office took occupancy in a corner of Darcy's Store in 1862. Darcy's Store was a mercantile business owned by William Darcy. The Post Office's name was changed to Bethesda in 1871. Rural delivery was established in 1893 under the supervision of Judge Alfred Wilson. The Post Office lost its independence in the 1920's when it became a sub-station of Washington, DC. In 1981, the Post Office again became an independent Post Office.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendation

Should this property be nominated to the National Register? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Give a brief statement to support your recommendation.

The building is neither historically nor architecturally significant. The architecture is typical of the period and is illustrative throughout the Eastern United States. As far as can be determined, there are no known historical persons or historical events associated with the building.

Prepared by Signature Thomas C. Kilpatrick	Final Recommendation by Signature Charles L. Fitzpatrick
Title Real Estate Officer	Date March 30, 1983
	Title Manager, Real Estate

M:35-14-5

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

See correspondence dated October 1986

ACTION TAKEN

The purpose of this amendment is to designate the following sites, located within the Bethesda Central Business District, on the Master Plan.

M: 35/14-1	Montgomery County Farm Women's Cooperative
M: 35/14-2	Madonna of the Trails
M: 35/14-4	Bethesda Theater Complex
M: 35/14-5	Bethesda Post Office
M: 35/14-6	Wilson's Store & Post Office

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

See correspondence dated August 23, 1985

ACTION TAKEN

PRELIMINARY DRAFT AMENDMENT TO  
THE MASTER PLAN FOR  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
BETHESDA CBD/MULTIPLE RESOURCE/  
THEMATIC HISTORIC DISTRICT

THURSDAY, September 26, 1985

at  
7:30 P.M.

in the

Montgomery Regional Office Auditorium  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland

The following resource which is also considered part of the district has already been designated on the Master Plan:

The Farm Women's Market #35/14-1  
7155 Wisconsin Avenue (designated 9/79)

to take testimony on whether or not the following historic resource presently listed in the Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites in Montgomery County should be included in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Bethesda CBD Multiple Resource/Thematic Historic District #35/14 including:

1. Little Tavern #35/14-3  
8100 Wisconsin Avenue
2. Bethesda Theater Complex #35/14-4  
(Cinema 'n Draft House)  
7715-7723 Wisconsin Avenue
3. Bethesda Post Office #35/14-5  
7400 Wisconsin Avenue
4. Brooks Photographers #35/14-6  
7349 Wisconsin Avenue
5. Community Paint & Hardware Store #35/14-7  
7250 Wisconsin Avenue
6. Tudor Style Shopping Complex #35/14-8  
7003-7029 Wisconsin Avenue
7. C&P Telephone Company Building #35/14-9  
6925 Wisconsin Avenue

THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED BY ACT OF THE MARYLAND LEGISLATURE, 1960

M:35-14-5

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

See correspondence dated December 9, 1985

ACTION TAKEN

Final Draft Amendment.....to designate the following sites,  
located within the Bethesda Central Business District, on the  
Master Plan

M: 35/14-1

M: 35/14-2

M: 35/14-4

M: 35/14-5

M: 35/14-7

Montgomery County Farm Women's Cooperative

Madonna of the Trails

Bethesda Theater Complex

Bethesda Post Office

Wilson's Store & Post Office

(Community Paint and Hardware)

m: 35-14/5

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

8787 Georgia Avenue • Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

RECEIVED

MEMORANDUM

December 9, 1985

DEC 28 1985

MARYLAND HISTORICAL  
TRUST

TO: Richard Ferrara, Director  
Department of Housing and Community Development  
John L. Menke, Director  
Department of Environmental Protection  
✓ J. Rodney Little, Director  
State Historic Preservation Office  
Priscilla Schwab, Chairperson  
Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: Melissa C. Banach, Coordinator MCB  
Community Planning North

SUBJECT: Final Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for  
Historic Preservation: Bethesda CBD Historic Sites

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I am pleased to transmit to you this Final Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

This document contains the recommendation of the Montgomery County Planning Board on the designation of individual sites in the Bethesda CBD.

Should you have any questions concerning this amendment, please do not hesitate to contact Marty Reinhart at 495-4565.

MCB:MR:dws  
Attachment

optional method, it may be appropriate to identify preservation of these additional resources as potential amenities to the project if demonstrated to be in the overall public interest.

<u>Site</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Associated Acreage</u>
35/14-5	Bethesda Post Office	7400 Wisconsin Avenue	13,211 sq.ft.

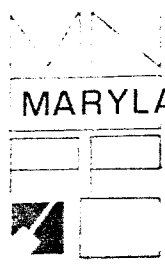
- Constructed in 1938 by the Sofarelli Brothers of Jamaica, New York, this single story, native stone building is neo-colonial in design and features a hipped roof with cupola and arched windows.
- One of a limited number of public buildings in the County constructed under the aegis of the Work Progress Administration (WPA). As a representative example of WPA construction, the building provides a physical link for the County with this important program and period in American history.
- This amendment recognizes that the Post Office, because of its scale, prominent location, and distinctive building material, has emerged as a landmark along Wisconsin Avenue. The site's importance as a public space will be further enhanced with the return of the Bethesda Madonna of the Trails. This amendment therefore designates the site's entire 13,211 sq. ft. parcel as the environmental setting.

<u>Site</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Associated Acreage</u>
35/14-7	Wilson's Store & Post Office (Community Paint and Hardware)	7250 Wisconsin Avenue	22,039 sq.ft.

- Circa 1890--Two-story, stucco over clapboard, frame commercial structure with one-story glass enclosed, shed-roofed porch and street-oriented flat facade featuring bracketed, decorative cornice.
- Architecturally the epitome of the turn-of-the-century village store, Wilson's Store and Post Office, known today as Community Paint and Hardware is believed to be the first commercial structure in the CBD and the only remaining vestige of Bethesda 19th century commercial beginnings.



M: 35-14/5



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

8787 Georgia Avenue • Silver Spring, Maryland 20907

(301) 495-4565

**RECEIVED**

August 23, 1985

**AUG 27 1985**

MARYLAND HISTORICAL  
TRUST

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Montgomery County Planning Board Staff

SUBJECT: Historic District Public Hearing

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Attached is a notice of public hearing on the nomination of a historic district in your area which may be of interest to you. The notice provides the date, time, and location of the public hearing and also provides instructions on how to submit testimony for the record. Should you have any additional questions on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Marty Reinhart at 495-4565.

MR:ms  
Attachment

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Pursuant to Article 28 of the Annotated Code of Maryland and Chapter 24A and Chapter 33A of the Montgomery County Code, the Montgomery County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission hereby gives notice that it will hold a public hearing on the following:

## PRELIMINARY DRAFT AMENDMENT TO

THE MASTER PLAN FOR  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
BETHESDA CBD/MULTIPLE RESOURCE/  
THEMATIC HISTORIC DISTRICT

THURSDAY, September 26, 1985

at

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in the

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to take testimony on whether or not the following historic resource presently listed in the Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites in Montgomery County should be included in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Bethesda CBD Multiple Resource/Thematic Historic District #35/14 including:

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6925 Wisconsin Avenue

The following resource which is also considered part of the district has already been designated on the Master Plan:

The Farm Women's Market #35/14-1  
7155 Wisconsin Avenue (designated 9/79)

The Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission has reviewed the architectural and historic significance of the Bethesda CBD according to criteria listed in the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code.

The Preservation Commission recommends that the properties listed above be designated on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation as a "multiple resource/thematic" historic district with the individual buildings to be protected under the Historic Preservation Ordinance which provides certain controls regarding alteration, demolition, and maintenance of the property.

If not included in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, these individual properties and the district, as currently delineated in the Locational Atlas, would no longer be subject to the provision of Chapter 24A-10, the Moratorium on Alteration and Demolition. The district will, however, remain on the Maryland Historical Trust's Inventory.

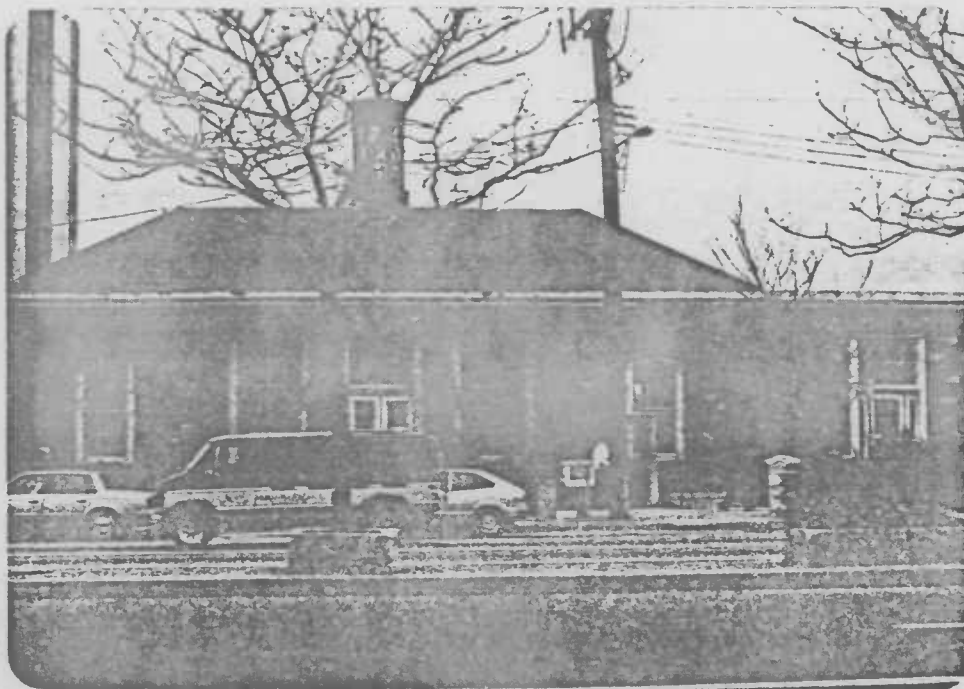
The Preliminary Draft Amendment is available for public inspection at The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's Regional Headquarters, 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland.

The purpose of the public hearing is to allow all interested persons to express their views concerning this action. Persons wishing to testify should call 495-4600. If you are unable to attend, write your concerns to the Montgomery County Planning Board at 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland 20907 and they will be made part of the public hearing record.

*Thomas H. Countee, Jr.*  
Thomas H. Countee, Jr.  
Executive Director

THC:MR:ms

M:35-14-5



Attach Photo Showing Front View



Attach Photo Showing Street View to the Right

M: 35-14-5



Attach Photo Showing Street View to the Left

Attach additional photographs of other significant features here. Use a separate sheet if necessary.